

**LOVE POEMS**  
**REGINALD C. ROBBINS**

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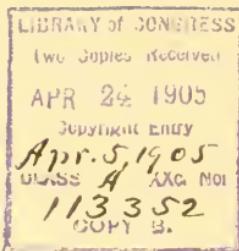


# LOVE POEMS

REGINALD C. ROBBINS



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AN ANNUAL CYCLE



## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### 1

SWEET, if these Songs of Sorrow in thy soul  
Mean a new music to a grief long dumb,  
Take them for utterance and speak them forth  
Transfigured by the passion of thy love !  
Sweet, what re-birth ! if so this verse that halts  
Complaining from a tongue whose only strength  
Is that it echoeth some sense of thee —  
Such shadow flame forth in the substance of  
Thy spirit's very power of life and light !  
Then were the service splendid ; then, the voice  
Full choir of glory ; and the song at last  
Heav'n-sent, heav'n-searching : thou, in truth, its  
God ! —

## LOVE POEMS

### II

LOVE, if this verse fail of acceptance in  
Thy spirit's tragedy, yea, miss a life  
Loftily thus ennobled in thy speech,  
Dream it not dead, still-born out of a blank  
And barren volubility. But read  
An heart-real cry, a soul-necessity  
Of self-relief — it will not harm thee so  
And may save me from madness.

There are hours,  
Belovèd, when the agony finds act  
In sound which owes no tongue articulate :  
Groanings and spasms of the shrinking frame  
Unhuman, brute-like. Wilt thou blame a song ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### III

MORN after morn unto these anxious eyes  
Brings expectation ; eve on eve descending  
Withdraweth opportunity : the day  
Done, and hope wasted : and the heart of hope  
Turn'd inward, wasting with the waste of days.

When was the world worn vacant ? when, the  
worth,  
Wonder and beauty of all ways of work  
Made mockery : and daylight, a despair ?  
I have known strength and sunlight in myself  
Of the new day : no mockery. But now  
Even sorrow stales ; and only desolateness  
Remains : and emptiness of any aim.

## LOVE POEMS

### IV

AND yet, 't were blasphemy! Lo, thou remainest ;  
Thou : and the thought of thee. And all my world  
Is wonderful, sacred because thy shrine.—  
There *is* a faith, a worship without end,  
A work and worth of work which meaneth thee!

Such is my privilege, to love thee now  
In every effort : every hour of earth  
Directed toward and still attaining thee.  
Thou art not secret from this world of thee,  
Strange from my world which is so wholly thine ;  
Which bends all energies and every aim  
To one aim : as thou knowest ; and shalt know !

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### V

I HAD not thought to have told thee. But some strength  
Impell'd me to the utterance, to bear  
The supreme splendor of the truth and thee.  
I had had vision of a vast, sweet peace  
In marvelous community with thee ;  
A life of strenuous labor wherein all  
Of heart and strength and soul were centred in  
Thy soul and strength and heart unioning all  
Earth and the things even beyond all earth —  
Made mine and thine and birthright of earth all.

I had my splendid secret with the rest. —  
Can such truth truly be ; and cease to be ?

## LOVE POEMS

### VI

I, WHO have dwelt (for thou didst find me so)  
In souls of most men else, did I forget  
Sudden the proxihood : and learn mine own ?  
I, was I strong to sense the personal lives  
Of brains and hearts not mine ; yet was so weak  
As to desire a life of brain and heart  
For mine : nor feel it in the lives of these ?  
Ought I but love their loves, call those mine own ;  
Leave thee to read and smile and nod approof ;  
Nor tell mine own tale — brain, heart, hope : and hell ?

'T were somewhat, to be crazed of an own grief,  
Ay ; and be ashen of a burning wish !

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### VII

I PLEAD not, urge not. Only ; if thy soul  
Setteth toward sacrifice, would save a world  
By any martyrdom, I point a way  
Plain to an uttermost accomplishment.  
If thou wouldst enter in and be at peace  
Anywhere, anywise : do thou but bid me  
Swift to thy hand, encompassing about  
Thy footstep, ordering an universe  
To be thy benison : me, strong to serve  
Only by virtue of thy saving need !

I plead but for the chance that thou wilt plead. —  
How would I save thee : praising any pain !

## LOVE POEMS

### VIII

'T IS thus it hurts — not wholly for mine own :  
Though that were desperate — but for thy heart,  
That it should feel a speechless sufferance  
Of ravening ; and this my suffering  
Be helpless to amend one throb of thine.  
This were the anguish — lo ! when all my soul  
Burns, agonizes to assuage each least  
Desire of thine, to see thy soul thus sick  
Of my same woe : that god-love uncreate  
Which broods, yea, broods : will not be comforted.

Yet, well thou knowest what my grief must be.  
Haply thy pity will assuage thine own ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### IX

AY, what if so this utmost sympathy  
Of thine for my grief, of my grief for thee,  
Be just such plasmic germ as quickening may  
Flower to a full community of joy ?  
Behold ! my soul is wholly thus this grief ;  
And thine, if I interpret thee aright,  
Wholly this grief : that thou in suffering  
Receivest in thy heart and mind and all  
All that is in me.

I am nought beside  
Than love and agony : or mine or thine  
I know not. Canst thou then so surely know  
Thy suffering nowise my soul in thee ?

## LOVE POEMS

### X

LET there be no delusion, dear ! The dawn  
Of friendship fades far past, and now a flame  
Springs in the vault, full-fraught with night and day !  
Thou, art thou friend, who yieldest in thyself  
Light and the blossoming of all mine earth —  
Else outer darkness and the void ? Art thou  
Friend, yea, or God, who holdest in my soul  
The keys of heaven and hell ; o'er all my being  
Power of life in death — and thou alone ?  
Day and its night ; heaven in hell : are these  
Truths, save of desperate divinity ? —

Love me, else end me ! There is no choice else !

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XI

LOVE, let the new truth utterly possess  
Thy soul and being ! Womanly accept  
Life thou createst by receiving so !  
Let the sea tell thee ; and the myriad earth  
Say nought beside ; and sun and stars alike,  
Winds and the canopy of clouds be but  
The one all-love that thou encompassest !  
Yea, where thou art is presently my soul ;  
And where I am is never far from thee. —  
Pluck thou the daisy-crown of this mid-year ;  
Pull thou its petals wantonly : to learn,  
“ He loves me, loves me ” : every ray, the same !

## LOVE POEMS

### XII

THOU spakest of recollection. But I speak  
An instant tragedy of thee and me.  
Our whole life speaks it ; and our life is now.—  
Let not the past dead-handed still oppress  
Thy patient spirit, that the grief of now  
Escape thee and its rapture. Let no mood  
Of torpor prey upon thee, that the pain  
Of present passion be benumb'd in thee.  
Livest thou now ; and yet wilt wait to love  
Till only deadness shall abide, where now  
Is mortal need : and mortal-meant appeal ?

Dearest, I love thee living : not too late.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XIII

THOU hast desired of me that I should make  
This poetry of private grief for thee.  
And duly from the source of infinite loss  
Wells the new word, grateful that thou hast given  
The privilege of speech. And yet were mine  
A world-wide grief that noblier in the speech  
Of seer and sophist to the heart of thee  
Sings an earth-passion, soul and God and all,  
Self-sanction'd, universal !

Such art thou,  
The unspoken sanctity. Shall not my song  
Make miracle of every soul of earth  
To voice thee in thy worldhood as thy Self ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XIV

FOR thus alone were godhead in the song,  
A world of tragedy made lyric too !  
If nature, earth, and sky, yea, all above,  
Below and of the firmament conspire  
To sing thee and to be thy soul in mine,  
How noblier, love, how richlier then the song  
Must owe thee, thy love and thy tragedy  
Made mine in human nature's first and best ?

“Pilate”<sup>1</sup>, much moved, would search thy soul : yet  
may not.

“Hegel”<sup>1</sup>, discoursing of the Christhood in us  
Of saviorship, sings but the grace I grasp  
By thee. And “Mary”<sup>1</sup> meets thee on the hills.

<sup>1</sup> The personages of certain unpublished religious poems of corresponding titles.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XV

URGE me not to concentrate then a sorrow  
Which weeps almost from every leaf and blade  
And every wave of the sea at sob with it !  
Leave me to brood and bear if so I may  
A grief which equally through every hour  
“ Walks with me, sitteth, yea, and lieth down  
“ Companionably ”, 'sooth, and comforting.  
What were the gain could I but banish quite  
This passion from the generality  
Of daily things ? — A world without thy soul  
For comfort ; and thyself so piercing sad  
'T were past imagining. World-grief were best.

## LOVE POEMS

### XVI

AND yet I 'll scarce admit the grief were less  
Subtly acute, for being distributed  
Through souls of many men and cognisance  
Of multiple philosophies. 'T were but  
That I, being thus less isolate, must find  
Solace and strength in social self-respect.  
What were my private self to bear alone  
The splendor or the agony ? What I  
Sole, to revere and worship thee without  
Support and proxihood of whom respect,  
Honor and dignity must needs attend ?  
And in their strength I bear the strongest grief.

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XVII

PRATE I of proxihood ? The thought of thee  
Privily comes upon me, and the world  
Is burn'd to one intense white heart of thee  
Or me, I know not ! And the sight of thee  
Is blood-beats, pulsings of a tiger-wrath  
Strong to devour thy very frame and all !  
Lo ! it is I, I who am wholly thou !  
And it is thou who Art, thou whom I mean ! —  
Swear by thy grief, protest by all thy gods  
Thou wilt not : and I swear by thy true self,  
Thou lovest, lovest me as I love thee —  
Even with a wrath that brooks not vicarage !

## LOVE POEMS

### XVIII

SWEET, I am sick with shame that I have spoke  
Such passionate speech : where only reverence  
And worship should disturb thee. I have troubled  
The pool of thy deep patience ; and stand mute  
Before the angel of thy proffer'd peace.

Yet, dwelt there ever utmost reverence  
And perfect worship in the soul, but spake  
The whole man with them ; if transfigured quite,  
Yet none less moved, even through hell's abyss,  
By heaven's own splendor ? Shall the depths lie bare  
And be not startled ? — Angel, but receive  
The passion with the worship : both, for pure.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XIX

YEA, for the fashion of our flesh is such  
That any energy refused and thwart  
Turns inward, preying as with lust and wrath  
On that which bore it. And I stand bewray'd  
In every act, each effort-energy  
Of all in the world, and only in myself  
Raven by mad imaginings. I fail  
Of any dignity or self-control  
And am as one unworthy of thy sight.

Yet, be the angel — thou that profferest peace !  
Lift me to thee and prove the worm I am,  
Thy seraph, whole and wonderful and high !

## LOVE POEMS

### XX

LOVE, I would pray thy pardon too in this,  
That all my words are still of thee and me.  
Fain wouldest thou draw the discourse into dreams  
Indifferent, fain interpret through thy world  
Some child-enjoyment of the face of things.  
And fain would I abet thee. But we are  
So otherwise than children, thou and I !  
There is a real-world ; and the face of things  
Hath soul ; and man and woman are we now,  
Past help. Yea, and this soul of everything,  
This meaning of the world's reality  
And manhood : this thou knowest, Child of God !

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XXI

I HAVE received of thee a gentlest gift  
Meant to be earnest of thy charity.  
The grace accorded is accepted so  
As thou intendentest. Yet thy gift to me  
Is life itself, a daily, hourly boon  
Of breath to breathe, light to the eyes of me,  
Warmth, motion, impact to the subtlest pulse  
Call'd mine ; and this, such infinite charity,  
Given and accepted without cost for thee  
By godliest emanation ! How much more  
Shalt thou be godly, giving thy whole self  
To my life ! May I faint not, overwhelm'd !

## LOVE POEMS

### XXII

LOVE, I am bound to thee by love's best vow  
Thy celibate and priest. The daily prayer  
Pours ceaseless ; and the penitential psalm  
Chanteth thy praise to perpetuity.—  
What peace of conscience in the faith confess'd !  
What sanctity of spirit in the calm,  
Clear gleam of sacrificial flame from this  
Thy fane ! I minist'ring am more than man  
If less than deity !

The altar breathes  
With passion of devotion. The rich rite  
Seems mine own soul at incense : yea, even I  
Myself, thy temple builded without hands !

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XXIII

AND, if the god absent him for awhile,  
What cause for consternation ? Stands not still  
Myself this temple, very house of him ?  
Lives not the faith ; shall not the rite endure  
Firm by a full assurance ? — Ay, some hour  
Shall there a light be, seen beneath the dome ;  
Within the fane, a voice of holiness  
And infinite sanctity. And all at once  
Fane, temple wake enraptured where the god  
Liveth, transfiguring, transfused of all !

Love, though the vow be the vow's sole reward,  
It is enough. — Love's faith is everything.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXIV

WHY should rebuke be mine that I impute  
Divinity to thee and saviourship ? —  
Were Christ not human ? Saved He not the world ?  
Wherefore, art thou (of all of womankind  
The humanest) most like to Christ in this  
That thou art saviour of my life and soul.

What were a God that were not I and Thou  
To inwardmost belief ? And what were we  
Did not the heart accept for very truth  
A mutual saviourship creator-wise ?  
Lies not my soul's abyss made bare to thee  
That thou shalt brood o' the void: and bring forth light ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XXV

IF ways of the world would mean thee, but the more  
Art thou the way, the truth and only life  
Of all things : yea, as God before world was :  
Nay, even as God Who is Himself as each,  
And only so is any God or world !  
Shall I have fear that God will hide His face  
Even from Himself, Whose very nature is  
Self-searching ? Shall world's mutual response  
Of each to each be to my soul denied  
Whose every conscience is of thee alone ?  
Lo ! I will have great courage ; and this faith  
That God is in thee : Who will work for right.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXVI

LADY, it is as if thou drewst a sword  
Sudden to smite me, whilst that at the gleam  
Of the weapon (nay, but at the weapon-flash  
Of the swift hate within thee !) I had swoon'd  
And left thee foelless : I, dead at thy feet ;  
Thine arm enfrustrate by the offenceless air. —  
And mine offence is that I love thee still  
After rebuffal through these life-long days.

Have patience, love, awhile ; possess thy soul  
If but a moment. For I love thee so  
I will endure thine eyes ; stung by their strength  
Will start and stand — for thee to strike me through !

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XXVII

IN measure as my faith in thee is strong  
Makest thou trial and default of it :  
Denying love, yet bidding me accept  
Truth of denial. For the more my love  
(And love or faith alike is wholly thine !),  
The more is love the truth of thee ; and this  
An error that thou offerest for belief.

Believe the paradox ! At worst it were  
A custom and a common frailty  
For love to find love yet in everything.  
Wherefore, if love be truth of everything  
And thou be all — how reconcile the lie ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XXVIII

IN sooth, the untruth was not always thine.  
Believe, love, love sees trulier ; and thine hour  
Of insight hath been when thy word and deed,  
Speaking thy soul, portray'd no paradox  
Nor offer'd any crucifix to faith !

I do believe that thou art purblind now,  
Since thou insistest on thy nescience.  
Only I ask thee, if love be but source  
Of every information, how thy sight,  
Being loveless, so assures of any truth ?  
Thy “ Neti, Neti ”, can it wisely mean  
“ I love not ”, if at heart thou dost not love ?

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XXIX

THY "Neti, Neti", this it were that seems  
Some formula, some funerary cult  
Spoke in a mystic sense of some one dead.  
It bears no living meaning to the ear  
Of one who knows the vital fact of soul.  
To one who knoweth thee it meaneth nought  
Save some bewilderment and mystery.

Belovèd, I toil : but nowise well-ordain'd  
Unto a ministry ; not girded for  
Any salvation. Yet not wholly waste,  
Haply against the hour when that I 've wrought  
Shall rectify itself in thy re-birth.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXX

AND how cease utterance, when all beside,  
Save utterance in toneless-tragic speech,  
Be utterly forbidden to my love ?  
For what were love which never moved its world,  
Was never moved, but bided, bided still  
A simulacrum or a vacancy,  
But nothing loving ? — Dear, and thus I wait,  
Speaking, though otherwise not troubling thee :  
A Memnon vocal to thy distantness.  
Dear, for thou scoff'dst : “ ‘T were chiefly, as I find,  
“ Thy presence that prevents. Thy screed I love ! ” —  
I yield thee absence. Love, what now precludes?

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XXXI

LOVE, but mine eyes must see thee and mine ears  
Hear thee anew, so be it I may make sure  
Thou art the very woman whom I love.  
For she was of a perfect intimacy  
In me, anticipating every pain  
And learning every agony, untold.  
And she responded to each human need  
With voice for voice, ay, with an harmony  
Which heal'd ; and, being inspired but to restore  
A soul to sanity, sang from the soul.

But thou within my heart art vague and blind,  
And canst not even answer to thy name.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXXII

HOW long, belovèd, will thy heart belie  
Thy soul's divinity ? O love, how long ?  
Here be the great days of remaining youth,  
Whilst still is hope of some high destiny  
(With thee, how high a destiny indeed !)  
And souls should be at labor to bring forth  
Abiding worth. Yet here I mutely wait,  
Too desolate, daily incapable  
Of any least accomplishment ; for none  
Are worth the lonely labor, nor the pain  
Of enterprise unshared with thee. And thou ?  
Art thou then quite content that things are so ?

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XXXIII

LIFE lieth in the hollow of thy hand  
To give and take ; to take unto thyself  
By giving utterly. And with the gift  
Will come new strength and new accomplishment,  
Doubly divine for me or thee : for both.  
Were it a strange and vast nobility,  
Coúld we apart, each with a separate craft,  
Create some splendor ? Were the tragedy  
Uplifting, searching, to suffice for both ?

Dear, nought sufficeth, save our love, to lift  
Me from a mire of meanness. Shalt thou say :  
“No Poet shall be moulded of my love” ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XXXIV

LOVE, men have mock'd me, scoffing: " He but dwells  
" In unreality, a realm of dream  
" All incommunicable ; for its stuff  
" Is alien to our human sympathy."  
And I have patiently but laid mine hand  
On this or the other solid stone of earth  
To touch it and, if dream there truly was,  
Be waked out of the dream and sane with men.  
Yet no awakening cometh ; and these stones  
Seem very stone-like as I touch them, dear.

Ay, no awakening ! And this world of thine,  
That means " I will not ", scoffs there, mocking me.

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XXXV

FOR, lo ! I, weary of the touch of stone  
In all things, put my hand forth as a man  
To feel thy woman-hand, and be — not waked —  
But healingly confirm'd in that high faith  
Men call a dream and alien. And my hand  
Stretcheth : but all that sheweth of vital power  
Is shadow ; and the substance nowhere seen.

Even as, belovèd, in a blessed sleep  
I dream'd in truth thou lovedst ; and mine eyes  
Were all one golden light and in my soul  
Was splendor as of morning. — Dear, I woke.  
The sun had risen. Forsooth, it was the day !

## LOVE POEMS

### XXXVI

STRANGE, should I learn to laugh contemptuous  
On thee, that thou imaginest my love  
Should wither with this withering of thee ! —  
If, as thou sayest, mine heart did ne'er know thee,  
Did never feel thy fire, nor take thy truth,  
Nor see within thy splendor ; if mine eyes  
Created thine out of the night and day,  
Mine ears devised thy music, and my hands  
Held stone at parting and at greeting thee :  
How should thine alteration touch my love ?

Strange, should thine alteration breed contempt  
And justify while still refuting thee !

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XXXVII

OUT of the depths, deep as the naked soul  
I cry to thee : and there is none to hear.  
For the god sleepeth ; or adventureth  
A journey ; or hath never need of ears ;  
Or, hearing, will not hear. And still I cry.  
Yea, from the depths I mounting by my soul  
Aspire to stand before thee, that thine eyes  
May see and help thee hear (as the deaf use)  
The anguish by this agony of prayer.  
And I have knelt within thy very gaze  
Unseen as still unheard.

I thank thee, dear.

What worse-than-sorrow : shouldst thou hear and see !

## LOVE POEMS

### XXXVIII

FOR, shouldst thou know the passion and the shame  
Wherethrough this soul upreacheth still to thee ;  
Shouldst thou but sense the Hell wherefrom I strain  
To touch thee and be human — in that hour  
Wouldst thou awake indeed and hurl me back  
Down, down a-howling whence I might not breathe  
(Like Satan whom the flame-bursts alone feed) ;  
So saving thy soul by true death of mine ! —  
Or in that hour might some new strength bestir  
To reach me and uphold whom only thou  
Canst teach salvation ? Dearest, wouldst thou learn  
Create mine heaven : yet nowise 'spoil thine own ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XXXIX

YEA, for the soul of man is high as God  
If lower still than Satan. And no soul  
Is past salvation. And no soul that stoops  
To save need fear but God is stooping too.  
I, in and of the abyss, yet know myself  
Divine by thus aspiring to thee ;  
By thee and through thee is my conscience clean,  
My breast a seraph's in the sight of all.  
Thus, if thou stoopest, bringing with thee breath  
Of heaven's own spaces, shalt thou lift at last  
An unclean thing that shall contaminate  
Even thee ? Or shalt thou doubly be divine ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XL

SO in the metaphor of many a creed  
We speak forth love, earth's common miracle.  
So with the meaning of a lover's heart  
I find truth in imaginings untrue  
Save to their faith that frees them. I, unworth  
To lace the latchet of thy shoe, may yet  
Mouth of the powers of heaven as of hell :  
Heaven, thy daily breathing-room ; as hell,  
But mine ensufferance. And I dare deny  
My birthright of contempt, giving earth name  
Which seers have known and loved life by.

And borrow  
Assurance of the name ; and worship thee.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XLI

FOR thou art not “as earth’s horizon-verge  
“A limit” to my life and still afar.  
But thou art very near, more near than aught  
Hand toucheth or sight taketh outwardly.  
Ears, though they hear, are not thy dwelling-place.  
But as the daily, hourly intercourse  
Of conscienced enterprise through every act  
Doth mutually intropemeate  
Earth spirit-wise through every spirit of earth ;  
Even in the nearness as the verge of things,  
Life’s outwardness that meaneth inwardly  
But inwardness : art thou.—What else were God ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XLII

THEREFORE, a little absence, doth it end  
The power and purpose of thy soul in mine ?  
Though I am wrack'd and worn, that speech with thee  
Would shake me as a reed ; though the heart break  
At every casual inference of thee  
In each environment nor thee nor thine —  
Art thou less with me that thou carest not ?  
Doth not my love fare forth to wing with thee  
Whither thou wilt, learning anew her world  
By sympathy in every walk of thine ?

Fare the world over, shall my heaven-in-hell  
Attend thee : and thine omnipresence stand.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XLIII

BEHOLD ! my spirit is spread with thee beyond  
Boundaries of the north or of the east !  
Earth is as nothing to the heart of thee !  
Big by thy breath's afflatus swells my soul  
To power, performance, yea, accomplishment  
Of all that stands work-worthy. And the world  
Seems worth the labor in the love of thee !

Set thou the trophy : and the meed I claim  
Art thou, the preordainèd of my love.  
State thou the terms of service : and I swear  
The stint completed ere thy speech shall cease. —  
Or state them not : and 'tis to move the world !

## LOVE POEMS

### XLIV

THOU sayest (withholding comfort) that thy care  
Must be for truth's sake — did I ask aught else ?  
Yea, have I sued that thou shouldst live a lie ;  
Or lend thee to a fraud no soul should speak  
Of man or woman to give comfort in it ?

When did I outrage truth in learning thee ?  
Or tell thee false that thou shouldst fool thine ear ?

Only, hast thou not heard yet ? Knowest thou not  
The name I call thee by that best means thee ?  
If thou wilt love and lend thy whole soul to it  
Shall not thy care, so surely comforting,  
Be then most surely for the sake of truth ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XLV

WAS it with poor excuse of easing thee  
One atom of thy pain that I profess'd  
This undertaking of these songs of love ?  
Was there pretence that I by any mean  
Might stifle self to furnish voice to thee ?  
A sorry mummery ! Might tongue so false  
Be fitted to thine utterance ? Speaks the soul  
By any puppetry ? — Love, if the song  
Hath moved thee anywhither ; anywise  
Been ease and solace to thee ; 't is but truth  
That makes the miracle : my love for thee  
At labor in thy soul to bring forth love.

## LOVE POEMS

### XLVI

DEAR, and perchance a whispering untoward  
Hath sneer'd : " His soul is but a voyager.  
" My love to-day ; to-morrow, any heart's  
" That neighbors him in his excursioning !  
" An heart so deft to snatch at any straw  
" Needs no salvation else ; is skill'd to swim :  
" May sink — for all his outcry to my soul ! "

A wanderer, indeed, and well-nigh done  
In this his desperate search ; an heart so used  
To prove straws, straws ; that any helping hand  
Had seem'd but mockery. — What last good chance  
That Thou didst never lean : to loose thine hold !

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

XLVII

AND yet I rise beside thee and I find  
Thee home and haven : and belong with thee.  
If of the stranger and the homeless house  
I long have suffer'd hospitality,  
If of the blank sea I have still outstared  
Innumerable meaningless dismays  
To mock me with imagined peace at last ;  
Am not I but the wiselier skill'd to know  
The authentic sign, the genuine report  
Of sight and reason to the journey's end ?

If of the world I voyage still a space  
Who may not dwell with thee : know I not Home ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XLVIII

IF I in speech have been unfaithful to thee,  
Or misdirected any deed from thee,  
Neglected thee in thought or follow'd after  
The sweetness of another soul than thine :  
Forgive me ; an there be aught to forgive !

From now, no more : I vow thee ! — Were there  
though

Blameworthiness in following thy command ?  
Sin, in abjuring so a God untoward  
Whose worship were prohibited of Him ? —  
Yet shall I clean me of obedience  
With prayer and fasting ; and be bold before thee,  
Fearing not thee : for all thy holiness.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### XLIX

YEA, rather, overlook the poor pretence,  
Forgive the feign'd obedience to thy will,  
The still forsown forswearing ! And forget  
That I have hidden beyond the seas and sands  
The rites of worship homelier-taught of thee.  
If a strange sun hath taken incense for thee  
And hymns of thee borne but a mystic name,  
If sweetness of thy soul but seem'd too sweet  
In some far hint of how thy heart might love :  
Ignore the self-deception. Nay, accept  
For faithfulness the extreme shift of life  
To save thy people to thy service still.

## LOVE POEMS

### L

AND thou, wouldest thou not scorn the proffer'd zeal  
Of one who lisp'd : " No beauty in the world  
" Nor worth is there whereon I 'd wish to look  
" Nor seek to dwell with, save but thine alone ;  
" I who in absolute innocence of love  
" Now swear I love thee, peerless beyond all  
" Which owe no privilege ! " ? Had he fit sense  
Of thee ?

But rather lay I at thy feet  
A worship that proclaimeth every heart  
And soul of earth right worshipful : in thee  
All focuss'd and centred, sphere in sphere  
Orb'd to love's universal immanence.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### LI

FOR thus in thy dear person thou dost lead  
Captive the world ; affording world free life !  
Thus art thou nowise comparable through  
Earth's length and breadth that were but earth at all  
By being contain'd of thee and so sustain'd.  
Therefore is meaning, reason and respect  
In faith and worship ; that acknowledgment  
Of thee creates the world, maintains it whole  
By the love-miracle. And any worth  
Declared of earth declareth but of thee  
The wonder and the glory. Love, wert thou  
Loveworthy, were thy world not worthy too ?

## LOVE POEMS

### LII

THEREFORE, to be fit mate unto thy soul,  
Must a man learn to love (so comprehend)  
All things 'soever ; that he well may know  
Thee by the splendor that is wholly thine.  
I from my youth have everywhere, with heart  
Open to understanding, sought to search  
The deepmost soul of things, being of faith  
Soul doth lie deepmost and is soul at last,  
'Soe'er bewray'd and 'wilder'd. Shall I now  
Deny soul ? Shall I cease an infinite search  
Through all thy regions, that my reverence  
Hath proved thy godhead in the loved and known ?

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

LIII

LOVE ! for that power which only thou canst give me —  
To toil and be not wearied ; which thy love  
Alone can grant — to fail nor be dismay'd !  
I from my youth have toil'd and have been wearied ;  
Yea, I have ever fail'd and been dismay'd.  
Now hath dismay wholly got hold of me  
And weariness. I toil not nor attempt ;  
But only wait thy mercy and thy word. —  
Nor is it service thus to stand and wait.

Therefore I móst am utterly unworth  
Thy love when most demanding of thee love  
To make me godlike and fit mate for thee.

## LOVE POEMS

### LIV

TIME was when I with firmer fortitude  
And some philosophy was wont to dream :  
“No failure can be where the soul is strong  
“To toil and takes success in work’s own sake  
“And needeth no results else.” If I fail’d  
And stood dismay’d, I laugh’d : “’T were but the fault  
“Of this dismay. On ! with a strength the more  
“Unconquerable that the touch of earth  
“Hath taught invigoration ! From the mire  
“Were loftier leap to flight than from that mound !”

Now that I know thine inspiration, shall  
The leap sink lifeless ? Shall the song be nought ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### LV

THE singer is not other than the song ;  
Nor is the song, love, other stuff than love  
In every inference. Thou lovest not  
The singer ? Let it be : thou lov'st the song.  
What more might be desired or attain'd ?

Yet, thou wilt say : “ Because I am assured  
“ By my self-searching that I love not thee ;  
“ Then is thy syllogism strain'd and false,  
“ The logic wanting. Else, the love I feel  
“ Even for the song is never love like thine. —  
“ Pardon an heedless word. Such love I mean not.” —  
Thus from my soul is taken that it hath.

## LOVE POEMS

### LVI

LOVE, once again have I transgress'd the bounds  
Set for the speech of man unto thine ear ;  
Once again begg'd the benediction of  
Thy lips to mine. Love, canst thou still forgive ?

Some can kiss lightly : not so thou ; nor I.  
Nought can give absolution from the sin  
Of such solicitation ; though thou still  
Forgivest, I can in no wise forgive  
My blasphemy. —

And yet, were the prayer heard,  
What consecration beyond blasphemy ;  
What perfect absolution ! Still canst thou  
Save me ; yea, still absolve from every sin.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### LVII

CALL this I ask of thee no trifling boon ;  
But love, the greatest of all things of earth.  
Then, but because thy very soul is great,  
Will this be easy that I ask of thee,  
The saving of my soul. Faith, hope, I have them.  
'T is charity that thou alone canst give.

Yet have I charity : for that is life ;  
And life is of the winter as of spring.  
Rouseth the year but by the year's own power  
Of earth-résumciance sustain'd of earth ?  
Shall my soul wait thee, when thy soul in mine  
Is quick-responsive to each hour of need ?

## LOVE POEMS

### LVIII

THIS miserable pleading with thy soul,  
Forgive it as all earth forgives the prayer  
Of murder'd autumn ! Could the season yield  
Sense to the stroke, and not in one last flash  
Of outraged blood betray the heart that beats  
Most hotly by the anguish ? If the life  
Stains forest-floor and cloud-rack with the hue  
Of martyrdom, shall blame be that the world  
Dies unrecanting and unreconciled ?

Pray thou that thy forgiveness reach me deep,  
Deep as the unrelenting agony :  
And hearten me to die as the dropt leaf.

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

LIX

LOVE, now in autumn woods I, with thee walking,  
Weep the lost springtime that so sweetly brought  
Thee to the threshold of my soul ; and summer  
That saw thee consciously enshrined of it.  
This other season, is it fruit of those ?  
Are these thy woman's words and thy loved ways  
Which crumble and are dust beneath the feet  
Of any wayfarer ; which, while the light  
Blared and the day were torrid-parch'd without,  
Spread for a solace to my private soul ?  
Was thy care nature's, with the weeks to pass ?  
Shall winter rack me leafless and alone ?

## LOVE POEMS

### LX

YET, would I change one word of all thy truth  
Hath said ; or have thee other than thou art  
By any subterfuge ? Must not thy soul  
Grow as the changes of the season'd year ?  
I gaze abroad ; and mark how intimate  
This harshening of the forest ; how her speech  
Is frank if not so fair, and nature's dearth  
Duly reveal'd bespeaks but chastening  
Toward nobler birth. — Shall not my heart accept  
The forest-omen ; sepulchre my soul  
To terrible endurance, till a surge  
Of re-birth wake and wrap me with thy spring ?

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### LXI

I FEEL the still snows sifting over me,  
Shrouding the scars of earth and brooding all  
In crystal benediction. Over me  
The wroth stream stiffens and the torrent takes  
An immortality of moveless force ;  
And all things are as iron. Here some gale  
Lashes aloft a sleet and stinging storm ;  
But rives no roots from out the vise and grasp  
That is my spirit. If a stricken groan  
Gasps from the rigid sap-wood — 't is not mine.  
My life is ended till the year hath moved.

Thou canst take up that thou alone laid'st down.

## LOVE POEMS

### LXII

THUS in the weak year's frenzied metaphor  
I face the disenchantment; front the world  
With one wan yearning to be hale and free  
In winter's way of self-dependence still  
Who scarce may quicken sunward. How the rack'd  
And feverish spirit turns refresh'd and firm  
To stand alone of frost and be of will  
To buffet and be busied ; brutally  
To do the day's insensate task and toil !

How noblest, to be mad for love of thee ;  
And not do madly ! How beyond all praise,  
To worship yet deny thee for my God !

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

LXIII

I, WHO am daily deeper drawn within  
The shadow as of sin born in the blood ;  
Who from the blackness of self-cynicism  
And vile world-weariness descry thy stars ;  
Cry to thee : “ Yea, Lord, save thy people still ! ”

Should all the best and dearest, upon earth  
Remaining, die about me : and I live ;  
Should every undertaking all-wise fail  
As presently have fail'd me all my works :  
And I still labor ; I might deem me saved  
And thee a living God as formerly ! —  
But now what sign assures me that I love ?

## LOVE POEMS

### LXIV

I FEEL upon my lips a look like thine  
I had not understood till latterly.  
And in mine eyes (what shone in thine like love !)  
A searching misery : for the vacant world  
Is passionate and bitter ; and I learn  
Thee by the suffering so like to thine.

And as I learn thee hour by hour, and know  
The desperate-sweet abysses of thy soul,  
Space by space with the insight waxeth loss ;  
Deathlike, though vital in the sympathy.  
For I, I may but breathe and be at all  
Only by utterly forswearing thee.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### LXV

SO hath the year come round wherein my love  
Did spring and blossom and send leafage forth  
And strike deep root in earth ; and wither with  
The season's withering ; and die away  
And lie in snow sepulchred. And the spring  
Is delicate over earth ; and myriad buds  
Push forth to feed on warmth and light : a film  
Of hope before the eyes, and through the air  
A gossamer radiance of vitality.—  
I see these signs, as leaves look shuddering up  
Out of some forest-charnel, whom the drift  
Thawing reveals to rot in dimness there.

## LOVE POEMS

### LXVI

FOR I am nothing in the round of earth.  
Her strength sweeps over me and surges by  
My soul fast buried, ay, though bare and blown  
As any weed-husk. If by dreaming toward  
The faint confusion I imagine days  
Of beauty and splendor still to come for earth ;  
If by compulsion of my sapless cells  
And frost-stript fibres I may fondly feel  
The life lost yester-year yet wonderful  
Elsewhere and otherwise than as I lie —  
'T is all. The sun in heaven proves dark, with thee :  
And these my seeds are barren from their birth.

AN ANNUAL CYCLE

LXVII

LOVE, even in the moment of a death  
That voided earth, sprang still the power of thee  
Insistent, vital. If world ended not  
With such an end, then nought that is of breath  
Can anywise deny thee. Could the dead  
Know thee, they were arisen full of life.

Yet, love, the wearying, wearying-out of love !  
The terrible inconsistency of death  
To take at last even the life of life  
And leave a gasping after vacantness ! —  
The void swoons in. Were I a thing of breath  
'T were otherwise. The dead cannot know thee.

## LOVE POEMS

### LXVIII

I FELT, when the stiff, simulated fate  
Seized on my sinews and the pulse-beats paused,  
Breath-labor ceased and every sense swoon'd off,  
Then that I was permitted to proclaim  
Protest supreme at life's intolerable  
Indifference to intolerable death.  
And yet what protest so were possible ?  
What yielding thus to death were any cure  
For death's injustice ? — And the life return'd :  
Lifting me chasten'd and subdued to bear  
The uttermost injustice love can know :  
Nor ask that any enter protest for me.

## AN ANNUAL CYCLE

### LXIX

UNTO all souls that sorrow be my sorrow  
For expiation that I ever sought  
An happiness ; my grief beyond all grief  
Be unto grief a last apology !  
Lo ! with what hush'd and awful penitence  
I, bow'd by disappointment as a cloud,  
Yearn to that ultimate companionship  
Of them that sit in darkness. And the shadow  
Of somewhat more than darkness bred before me  
Spreads gloom ; vouchsafes assurance how with them  
I sit me down forgiven : in the dust  
And ashes ashen ; reconciled with death.



POEMS OF GNOSTICISM



## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### I

BELOVÈD, it is too true I was not fit  
To stand before thee, saying, “Here am I!”  
The manner of my life was not as now  
A glad thank-offering, nor mine inmost soul  
(Save as thou hadst fill’d erst the vast of it!)  
A space of consecration. And my life  
(But for the truth life once belong’d to thee)  
Was void dispersion; and mine energy  
Of soul some dispossess’d perplexedness  
Daily degenerating out of strength.—  
Nay, that some song had seem’d approved of thee  
But made a misery of the dream of it.

## LOVE POEMS

### II

BEHOLD, I was as nothing in myself  
Save as I tended toward thee. And when thou  
Withdrewest unto thyself and didst deny  
My birthright of approach unto thy soul ;  
Forbad'st access, and madest of my prayer  
Crime against reason : then each hour by hour  
Was my distracted motion turn'd away  
From my best self and substance ; that my life  
Was loss each hour by hour, losing earth all  
With thee ; my faith, my reaching out to thee  
But proven mine isolation : in each act  
Frustration of an aimless finitude.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### III

FOR, as the world of old cosmology  
Defined of form and motion, I'd aspired  
With seeming guarantee of goal divine  
Through manifestation many and diverse  
In preordain'd succession : dreaming on  
A progress, an enfolding of my past  
In that which springeth from it presently  
To new ennoblement. And, like that world,  
Betray'd by sudden orphanage from thee  
I waked to degradation ; feeling each  
Necessitated onwardness some loss  
Of vital potency from what had been.

## LOVE POEMS

### IV

AND, though in hours of insight I had known  
The refutation of their fault involved  
In any definition of a world  
As soulless mechanism — how, without  
Mind is the mechanism but metaphor  
For teleology extrinsic to it ;  
And but by teleology of force  
Intrinsic to each individual fact  
Were mass at all mechanic in itself  
(Only by thee within me were I whole) —  
Yet for the hour was mine emotion mad  
With strength-dispersion in each act of me.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### V

YEA, I had known how every least impact,  
Even by its wide impulse illimitable,  
Concludeth in the essence of each part,  
As it is part, the substance of the whole ;  
And thus alone were any whole defined,  
By comprehension inwardly of each  
By each throughout love's wisdom-universe.  
Love, I had known love and the logic-law  
Delimiting, discriminating love  
In constitution of the truth call'd soul :  
Yet, feeling not soul's self-createness  
Beyond loss, I was as one dispossess'd.

## LOVE POEMS

### VI

LOVE, in the earlier light, illusive proved,  
Each effort (as some flowering of faith)  
Seem'd concentration, each to new consent,  
Of all toward thee ; each, cumulative proof  
Anew of worth and wonder, dignity  
And rapture at thy ruling. And everywhere  
Seem'd new-won manifestation, new-defining  
Divinity of thee. The world had growth,  
Warranting, if but by the hope divine  
That look'd before and after, even that sense  
Of incompleteness which the past must show.  
Each act seem'd victory — for all its cost.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### VII

AND victory, alone by costing sore.  
The inevitable failure to obtain  
Any consent from thee, the God I 'd move,  
Though guarantee at worst that I through thee  
Felt fate-reality, yet point by point  
Frustrated each accomplishment, debarr'd  
My strength from soulhood ; left me in myself  
Self-thwart and baffled : only in that sense  
Of terrible discontent yet nobler than  
Their pure degenerate automatism  
Void of all conscience of unworthiness.  
For my degeneracy was still — mine own.

## LOVE POEMS

### VIII

AND therefore when at last thou didst destroy  
All vestige of thy loved divinity,  
Didst wipe from the world at a word each symbol, sign  
And imputation of the creed I 'd known ;  
Then was I fallen beneath despair at last,  
A soulless thing, an atom-vacancy,  
A maelstrom with no meaning : nought to move,  
Nought to be moving. And the unceasing song  
(For song, though shamed, remain'd to show I still  
Lived) was of nothing living : oniy death  
Was burden of the voice that still spake thee.  
And but for song had I been wholly dead.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### IX

BUT : with the miracle that song remain'd  
Over, beyond my mere mechanic breath  
(That someway was an unity unknown  
Required of faith to make conceivable  
The very isolation); and with a true  
Development, within the thought of death,  
Of life the all-containing self-contain'd :  
Awoke in me wiselier the deity  
Of thee as of some immanence, unlike  
A goal beyond my striving : but attain'd  
With every impact of activity,  
In so far forth as altering my world.

## LOVE POEMS

### X

IT were not that an immanence not I  
Pervadeth broadcast through an outer earth  
Or thee or not-thee as the chance might stand.  
For then wert thou else deity but of stone,  
Else pre-establish'd as some truth-for-all  
Unvitalizing, undefined at last  
By any effort: hence, no truth of mine.  
'T were rather that each personal intent  
Were ineffectual, earth were anarchism,  
Save for thy mutualizing unity.  
An unioning itself defined (thy truth  
Love-comprehended) by each act of me.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### XI

AND therefore, in so far as strength might stir  
To some accomplishment, conserved I thee ;  
And, finding day by day beneath mine hand  
This, that, or other opportunity  
For action ; was I as a world sustain'd  
Even by the infinity which had seem'd loss,  
Even by the interminability of change  
Proceeding outward through an universe  
From each least impact of each part on part  
(Thereby made whole, my part through thee !); thereby,  
By being as fact infinitesimal,  
Not isolate but infinite, each truth.

## LOVE POEMS

### XII

AND therefore since, without the former shame  
Of imperfection striving but toward thee  
Nor as by isolation utterly  
Debarr'd from thee, I learn thy saving truth  
As essence of my being and know thee  
For immanent although thou bdest apart :  
Therefore for thee now fit (as earth for earth's  
Own absolution) 'fore thy face I stand  
Saying : “Thou life within me, here am I!”—  
I was not alway so. But I have come  
Through orphanage from thee ; and am as one  
Whom fire hath purged and fear hath clarified.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### XIII

FOR now I dream not with the formal creeds :  
“ This is of thee, O God, this hint of love.  
“ And this, this implication of an hell,  
“ This lovelessness is nothing of thy deed.”  
Nor with the nescience of their modern cant  
I cry : “ Heart scarce may know thee. Thou art nought ;  
“ Else art some mystery beyond man’s sight  
“ Indifferent to his world.” — For then were I  
Unfit for thee, whether in all my ways  
Of godlessness, or as the earlier fault  
That knows not God in His world-tragedy.  
But I, I learn thee in each hour I live.

## LOVE POEMS

### XIV

WHEREFORE am I most fit to stand before thee  
With the unceasing prayer : “ Love, here am I.”  
Though I be as the basest of the unclean  
(And who, in speech unto thy sanctity,  
Were better than blasphemer ?), must I be  
Nevertheless ennobled, as thy sight  
Is mine ; as to the pure all things are pure.  
Wherefore I do avow : “ I am not fit.”  
Even as this desperate passionate poor world  
Stands overtly unworthy of the soul  
Which constantly conserves and self-redeems  
Its loss and nescience unto absolute worth.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### XV

THUS too I speak the truth out unto thee  
As to an oracle and confessional  
From one whose conscience of acknowledged sin  
Placeth his heart in power and purity  
To teach thine obligation to thy world.  
Though I have call'd thee oracle, I prove  
No oracle nor any world-withdrawn  
Mysterious equivocality  
Divine. If I, by being of the earth earth,  
Have conscience of divinity through thine,  
Then must thou, to be inmost thyself  
A god, have conscience of thy world in me.

## LOVE POEMS

### XVI

SO till the end make I to thee my song  
And pray to thee : “Belovèd, here am I”—  
Insistent : that this fire and fear (wherethrough  
I as the modern thought of men am come —  
Through losing God and with their god all worth  
Of worldhood ; and through darkness that is felt  
· Of nescience — now anew am come to thee),  
That this thy world, proving divinity,  
May enter in and new-define thy spirit  
Unto reciprocation. For without  
The world as thou hast made it art thou nought. —  
Belovèd, my life is love. Be thine but so.

## POEMS OF GNOSTICISM

### XVII

FOR, though the tragedy of earth be still  
Thy meaning, and divine, though there be nought  
That is not of thee, yet hath earth degrees  
Of God-accomplishment, and earth would fain  
Be saved from self by self's own cognizance  
Of new-won consecration through thy soul.  
Hence, when I pray thee : “ Be thou of this world  
“ Savior in thine own sight by entering in  
“ To this my tragedy of me and thee ”,  
I ask thee not some bitter sacrament !  
I ask thee but to lift unto thy lips  
The poison-cup to find it fill'd with wine.

## LOVE POEMS

### XVIII

YEA ; for, though in my bitterness of heart  
(Like orphan'd earth, save for sad consciousness  
Even of the orphanage) I seem'd to thee  
Deservedly an outcast from thy sight ;  
And though these orisons wherewith my soul  
Seeks rehabilitation may to thee  
Seem as some sophistry ; I cannot yield  
That I, who know myself to love thee well,  
When loved by thee shall show by any sign  
Failure of full reciprocal desert  
To save thee as thy service saves me now.  
So thy creation singeth : creating thee.

# AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY



## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### MID-OCEAN

ONCE again call the leagues unto my soul :  
“ Be thou, as wave and froth of the white sea,  
“ No more a sufferer station’d, but a power  
“ Wanton as heaven blown over the earth  
“ Strong, saline, health-fill’d, unconfinable  
“ To freshen and renew and be alive  
“ With world’s on-moving ! ” Once again I take  
The heave and throb that proves an onward pulse  
And plunge of this sea-monster.

And the verge

Of the east shall mean thee and the rising sun :  
Even as this sun that sinks now in the west  
With thee to slumber — while I wake and move.

## LOVE POEMS

### THE GULF OF LYONS

BEHOLD ! a barrier of antiquity  
Thrust in between us ! For myself have pass'd  
The Pillars ; and am borne of this blue gulf,  
The Carthaginian Sea. And one long year  
Is blotted from my life since last I stood  
Before the Pillars, paused and enter'd not  
But turn'd and plough'd a pathway home — to thee !

Now hath my home forsaken me. I turn,  
Sick though at soul ; pause not ; but enter in  
And feel the ancient world so near alive  
Without me : that within me thy loved year  
Drops dead. And Carthage only sails with me.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### VESUVIUS

YET how the passion of earth and agony,  
Though issued in a thousand awful streams  
Of fire to shake and shatter, buried deep,  
A civilization ; and though sepulchring  
Cered dust through centuries ; spring born at last  
To some new purpose, some support of hope  
And trust in human duty.— Lo ! what dream  
Of peace, luxuriant serenity,  
Yon vineyarded Sorrento smiling, yea,  
On earth's avenger. Ay, and that wasp-work  
Call'd Pozzuoli plaster'd on the hills.  
And Ischia, chasten'd yet imperishable.

## LOVE POEMS

### POMPEII

THOUGH, be the last prayer of mine ashen soul  
That none unbury what this love hath burnt !  
Live the world as it will ; yea, wake my heart  
To laughter and dancing and earth's green anew  
(Mocking dead days imprison'd and the passion  
Sodden and cloddish that bears down upon them) :  
Be the long years ensuing what they will  
Of bright vitality — mine hour is run  
Of faith and power and beauty. I would lie  
Rather choked up with dust that was a flame ;  
Than stir and rouse me, move and breathe about  
A stranger under heaven : my charr'd soul, cold !

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### ÆTNA

YET art thou still a spirit above all  
This froth and turmoil of the narrow seas  
Tall, angel-vestured and thine head held high,  
Snow-splendid unto heaven and the sun.  
We of the tumult and the desperate straits  
May pray to thee ; may, in the depth of need,  
Leap landward, struggling in Charybdis' swirl :  
And drown or not drown — were it aught to thee ?

I, who in blessed hours of summer's ease  
Have seen thy clouds snatch'd as by thine own hand  
Bare from thine heart ; and known thee lean to me  
With overpowering sweetness : need I die ?

L. of C.

## LOVE POEMS

### THE LAND OF GOSHEN

NAY, I will live, take comfort as I may  
In this low land thy scorn hath left to me,  
Wherein to sojourn till an hour be born  
Of Godhood and of home-return. No home  
Can there be here for me nor for my God ;  
Yea, only space for tarrying awhile :  
Yet were there lesser gods who here their home  
Had made through countless ages ; here did dwell  
Worshippers somewise, Pharaoh's folk who call'd  
This deep dark earth and fertilizing flood  
Mother and father unto them. — Perchance  
The flesh-pots of the spirit here were full.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### THE BUILDERS

AY, here is history not unlike thine  
Of high endeavor toward divinity  
Spoilt in an half-creation : this, of power  
Sans soul ; thy faith, of insight but not will.  
Yet thou, like these, conceivedst an altar-place  
Unto the most high God ; and like to these  
Didst build thee temples and adorn thee shrines  
Within the brain and heart and soul of me :  
That all was holy ; that the land had sung  
One cycle of praise and worship.

Shalt thou let  
Thy temples turn sarcophagi ? Yea, build we  
And cease : and are as these left by the way ?

## LOVE POEMS

### MOKATTAM

#### I

LOVE, I have sat and seen the sun go down  
On Egypt, pyramid and minaret,  
Stark desert hills, green harvests and the mists  
Of epoch-ancient cities : all of one  
Gold glow ; and heard the noise of beast and man  
Ascending as though earth were new and had not  
Lived through her day and yearn'd still unto night :  
That, now descending, ends all. And I feel  
The meaning of those towers that crumble down  
Whilst calling still to heaven ; and of those tombs  
Of some dead man-god which are temples, yea,  
And shall be temples when these homes are not.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### II

FOR I have lived the sorrows and the shames  
Of some long mystery ; and in myself  
Been as the passing of a world of kings  
Through many sunsets. And am come to know  
The poignance of yon hearth-smoke that ascends  
In straight, thin air-shafts through the yellowing light  
Mixt with those voices. — And I am alone  
Weighing the wonder of a crumbling heaven  
And death abiding and the dust of things  
And misery : I alone, of these gaunt cliffs,  
Watching the sundown. It was night-time then  
With me and Egypt. — Was it morn with thee ?

## LOVE POEMS

### THE PYRAMID

“THY shadow on these burning sands shall swing  
“Noon, yea, and noon ; though all thou heldst of man  
“Shall long be dust. And, with the perishing  
“Of all he held immortal, shall the creed  
“Which built thee to contain eternal life  
“Lift from the world and leave thee nakedly  
“An heap of stone.” —

And still my shadow, like  
This desert pile's, out on the desert leaps  
At morning, swings over the barren world  
Till evening lengthens it on homes of men  
In coolness. Yet the creed that built my soul  
Is lifted : and I lie before thee stone.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### MEMPHIS

MY love was some vast city stretch'd abroad  
Through league on league. And in me there did dwell  
Grandeur. And all the tribute of the world  
Was wholly mine. Mine early God was not  
As Egypt's lesser gods : but pure and fit  
To stand by Brahma at Jehovah's hand.

Now there is nothing left of all that was.  
Only some sepulchres ; ay, and, 't is said,  
Some image of the God that men have found  
And kept for chronicle.— And on the earth  
My bulk lies shatter'd. And the desert birds  
Have made a station of mine ears and eyes.

## LOVE POEMS

### PTAH

MEN have imagined gods. But God is dead.  
The substance of all gods is not as they,  
Creature of time and circumstance ; but His  
Impassibility is absolute.  
And therefore is the grave-cloth, not the crown,  
His symbol ; and His frame is emptiness.

Love, we have sought through ages to attain  
A godship that is absolute as His,  
No creature : yet, no emptiness, but fill'd  
With world's totality : and named it Love.—  
I had attain'd and lived. But now my frame  
Is emptiness ; uncrown'd. And God is dead.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### THE SPHINX

SUN hath turn'd no full cycle yet since Sphinx  
First gazed on flood and harvest. But the fruit  
Of earth is elsewhere garner'd than of yore.  
And the great sand encroaches. —

I, too weak

To work with world's late power, have lain me here  
'Mid earlier peoples and a morning faith  
In every dawn's uprising: that with this  
Mild, pitying image I may yet ignore  
The pathos of the westering of the sun  
Through thousand ages: that, by length at last  
Of years, I be still watching when the dawn  
Breaks of a new earth and returning day.

## LOVE POEMS

### THE NILE

“ NOT with the tumult of a thousand tongues,  
“ O Nile, but silently with serious pace  
“ And sympathy a thousandfold for earth  
“ And men and for the misery of things ! ” —  
So pray'd I. And old Nile unto my need  
Hath made response. A thousandfold his flow  
Enfolds me. In his broad beneficence  
Seem suffering and misery foregone.

And thou, like Nile, not as I mourn'd thee late,  
Movest : a quickening and fecundity  
Unto my barren being. And in me  
The glad seed blossoms ; and the land is green.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### LUXOR

#### I

LOVE, for, if all 'soever of the world  
Must pass and yield place to the new that but  
By ruin of things old and in their fall  
Can build and flourish and be more than they  
(Making the dead best live, that only slept  
Till strength stirr'd o'er them) ; and these tottering  
halls

Be now so tragic-splendid that the soul  
Seems smother'd by their very dust : how vast  
Must be the world built out of these, beyond  
Conception of endurance, place or mass,  
In time's unsculptured speech, those harmonies  
Which live by motion, yea, by perishing :

## LOVE POEMS

### II

AND thus are everlasting ! If my love  
Seem'd of such beauty that the whole heart faints  
With memory of some entablature,  
Some architrave or column crumbling down  
Out of the reaches of an infinite air —  
And earth is desolation : shall not I  
Allow the working of my soul ; and build  
As none have built before, not out of stone  
But mutability, of birth-in-death  
Absolved and reconciled — the absolute Art ? —  
I know not. Only, now the breath comes blind  
With dust and tears. For still something would bide.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### THE TWO COLOSSI OF AMENOPHIS AT THEBES

ONE had not sat and waited here so long  
Alone. But, thus companion'd, it might be.—  
When dusk had come and all the night was dark  
And dreadful in its hoar decay ; and stars  
Were dimly distant : then had one alone  
Been fearful ; and the morning had not found  
Him vast nor steadfast. But, with two to feel  
A sympathy through earth's long night of things,  
Dawn seem'd not doubtful. And when dawn at last  
And sunsurge smote, yet no expected tone  
Gave sonorous response : then had one brow  
Melted. But two have still survived the shame.

## LOVE POEMS

### NIGHT ALONG THE RIVER

TALL palms athwart the lifting moon their plumes  
Sweep as in pale procession ; and beyond  
Gleams silver-gray the desert whose grim hills  
Move ever stilly and with sheen of some  
Broidery to the hem of Egypt's robe. —  
A cere-cloth and a pitiable show  
Of grandeur as the ruin'd tinsel round  
Some stark sarcophagus ? Some corpse of love  
Trick'd out in ornament to wear thy name  
Yet crumble at the first lift of the lid  
And fall to powder at a finger's stroke ?

Say, rather, fresh strength stirring : though one love.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### DAWN AT ASSOUAN

FOR is not Egypt wakening anew  
Whilst none less Egypt? If no longer dead  
And buried 'neath the ruins of her strength  
But builded o'er them otherwise than they,  
Yet none less Nile's own nation stretch'd afield  
Green to the sun and flourishing as when  
'T was Pharaoh's granary? — If recent hands  
Would alter and by altering revive  
The spent vitality, shall I then shrink  
From any least enlightening, for the fear  
Dawn were not thine: as day, night, both have been?

Life, if but life, were Egypt's: more than death.

## LOVE POEMS

### PHILÆ

YEA, here is something of magnificence  
Which hath been ; which shall never again be  
As it hath been ; and which our very zeal  
To foster and preserve hath made unworth  
Men's admiration. Liefer, let it lie  
Lovely beneath the fertilizing flood  
A sacrifice to new civilities ;  
Than worse than waste our labor, spoiling all  
The beauty as the tragic offering,  
The benefit and vicarage alike ! —

Were yet yon temple even I myself,  
None other ; would I spurn thy fostering ?

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### ABU SIMBEL

#### I

OUT of the sullen stone thou carvedst me  
An heart, and madest it magnificent  
With sculptured imagery, that all my walls  
Had borne thy features. And beneath my roof  
Even in the midst of me the vault was held,  
Yea, by thy form and person splendidly  
Hewn of my living substance. And my gates  
Were guardian'd round by thee, thee mountain-huge  
And heaven-like exalted, that the world  
Of mountain and of heaven's high vault might know  
Who builded him and who was this man's soul.—  
Yet came the sand and choked all utterly.

## LOVE POEMS

### II

AND after may come searchers who have seen  
Some crown obtruding or a sacred brow  
Unburied by some chance swirl of the gale  
And rearing marvelous, inexplicable  
Out from the driven desertness and death  
To mock with wonder. And perchance their toil  
Shall find the splendor of thy person still,  
Though worn and shatter'd with the centuries,  
Sufficiently denoting what was once  
Of vast religion and eternal faith.  
And they shall see where the last line broke off.  
And share thy cenotaph with bats and owls.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### KHARTOUM

AY, love, for what avails sincerity  
If earth hath other truth none less sincere  
Which, overpowerful, must twist and thwart  
My singleness of purpose to some snarl  
Of falsity ? That here a noblest life  
Went down in darkness and distrust, but that,  
With peace at heart, he held perforce a sword ;  
With war in every purpose, yet pursued  
Conciliation : such must give us pause !

What were my love when met with truth none less  
Sincere of unlove, than a hate at heart ;  
As hate profess'd, other than love for thee ?

## LOVE POEMS

### OMDURMAN

THUS in these uttermost antipodes  
Hath throed and sprung through fiercest tragedy,  
Through writhings of the heart implacable,  
The new truth : how the final service God  
Hath ask'd, were just — death ; though the world deny  
And call religion madness. Should I hate  
Hard as I love thee, be not much amazed  
At the apostacy — 't were death to me !  
Which thou, as now I understand thy will,  
Demandest : leaving me to lie and bleach  
Bone-white beneath the sun, scorch'd on this sand.

So in my desertness I still live love.

## AN EGYPTIAN JOURNEY

### THE DESCENT TO THE SEA

SO in my desertness I need thee still !

Though the white eastering waves shall pour and pour  
Over and past and on beneath, whilst soul  
And foresight, will and all intelligence  
Are firm to the one purpose to resume  
World's interrupted labor and defy  
Their ruin that is in me — all is thou.  
Thou, these gods' fall ; and thou, time's pulse and tread  
That plants its onward foot upon their neck  
League after league : and thou at last the goal  
Of desperate persistence godlessly.

Egypt, mine Egypt, only hath been thou.

## LOVE POEMS

### EXODUS

“ THEREFORE, not thou canst cure me of myself,  
“ Egypt ! scarce thou ; nor yet thy swarth Soudan  
“ Beyond thee fervid, tragic equally !  
“ Not hundred-hued sweet Thebes, with morning and  
“ With evening in her temples and her fields,  
“ Opal and emerald and gold, can free me.  
“ And if not thou, great Egypt ! then what else  
“ That earth hath of the living or the dead ?”

For I am not as I would other men  
May be : full meekly to revere (nor crave)  
Thy beauty and thy wonder and thy might.  
I leave thee as I came. For I am I.

# PALESTINE UNVISITED



## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### I

BECAUSE the vivid West with thy wan soul  
Is bound and burden'd ; and the year of love  
Is past with that short season of thy faith ;  
And, though thou breath'st, yet that thou livest not  
Save in an outward semblance : therefore toward  
An East long dead and moveless, breathless, lost  
Out of all motion of earth's outward year,  
I with my faith, my soul, at latency  
Yearn marvelously, ay, mysterious-wise :  
Seeking some vital substance. Where the world  
Hath been but is not, haply there the soul  
Liveth ; and recompenseth living faith.

## LOVE POEMS

### II

WERE the hope wanton ?— I had thought to find,  
Here where thy masterful rich womanhood  
Dwelleth at compact with a world of power,  
The absolute completion. When my love  
And joy in thee made harmony of all ;  
And strength seem'd autovital : then thought I :  
Though earth might pass, fulfilling so earth's self  
By death, yet faith that had upbuilt the world  
Were everlasting : and our life therewith.—  
Now shall I deem the syllogism strain'd ;  
And love, as earth, fulfilling self by death ?  
Or might I hope my love, love not enow ?

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### III

THE worship had seem'd sacred utterly ;  
The faith, redemption ; and the sacrifice,  
Foreseen and almost as with fortitude  
Accepted, seal'd or so had seem'd to seal  
The consecration. And though earth were dead,  
Dream'd I, religion, heart's criterion  
Of life or death, were not a thing to die. —  
Now were criterion of life or death  
Itself death's subject ? Might oblivion  
Lay hold on that intelligence wherethrough  
Alone might any memory have end ?  
Or were religion not of me and thee ?

## LOVE POEMS

### IV

OUR love had seem'd so much religion-like  
That when the first inevitable loss  
Of faith ensued upon the death of thine,  
Then I with incommended subtlety  
Deduced full analogue with love's old tale  
Of One ; and of the endurance for awhile  
Of faith in Him ; but now even as His world  
Were dead in the East, so that the faith of Him  
Had likewise perish'd. Thus I bitterly  
Denied my better insight that had been ;  
And yielded to an imagery obtain'd  
Not of His message : but of earlier gods.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### V

FOR to a land of old fatuity ;  
Of half-forgotten fetters ; of strange faiths  
And mystic fantasies of monstrous forms  
Half worse-than-human ; and of wrecks of these :  
I fled ; where every feature of the earth  
Might picture ruin as it was in me :  
So to escape thy world, thy mockery  
Of strength unquenchable. And there I found  
A faith gone-under and an ancient soul  
So dead 't was marvel it seem'd once alive.  
And so I sought to feel the death of faith  
An incident and instance of all things.

## LOVE POEMS

### VI

SOMEWHAT there was, I call'd in that dark hour  
The spirit still of thee, that would not die.  
Someway such antique land, though desert-dread  
And worthless of a resurrection, told  
Thy story over and over as I gazed.  
I call'd it lingering faith within my dream  
Of thee and came away with on my lips :  
“ Egypt, mine Egypt, only hath been thou ”—  
Blaspheming, as I know. Though thou wast dead  
In me, there rose even from those soulless stones  
A soul ; an insight of a valent faith  
That was in them : for all its falsity.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### VII

A FAITH that so, despite its falsity  
Of hewn enormities, of life trod down  
To stifling in death's effort to endure  
Without end by material monument,  
Was infinite, forever working on  
Into the living faiths that since have been ;  
And ended not with crumbling of its tombs.  
A faith that therefore and therein alone  
Was somewhat still beyond my faith in thee  
And buoy'd me up and led me on to know  
There might be life without thee : not without  
Divinity. Thou, not my soul, wast dead.

## LOVE POEMS

### VIII

AND thus that thou in soul and all with thee  
Of thine onworking West are to my spirit  
Dead ; and there lie beyond the morning lands  
Of desolate stagnation : following on  
The hint old Pharaoh's stagnancy hath given  
I journey. And my journeying shall find  
An holy place in desolation, though  
Long desolate yet holy. And a faith  
I once deem'd dead with its own sacrifice  
Shall haply surge again. And in its life  
Shall faith in thee, religion-wise, renew  
The soul lost out of labor : and we live. —

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## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### IX

FOR nothing is there here that hath endured  
Of tomb nor monument ; nor sought to stay.  
If Egypt wastes her substance to endure  
And deems destruction and the desperate change  
A death, what hope were, in a world of change,  
That Egypt, save in some vague grief alone,  
Should be an influence to later years ?  
What hope were, mine Egyptian, that thy change  
Should seem in me less than an utter death  
By desperate destruction ; thou alive  
Save as renunciation ? — Someway here  
The sacrifice seems consonant with strength.

## LOVE POEMS

### X

HERE is no effort against onwardness,  
No hint of horror at self-sacrifice  
Even to obliteration. Here the past  
Lives by its willingness, yea, zest to move  
Outward and still beyond, absorbing all  
Of future wonder by desertion quite  
Of first scenes and the primal face of faith.  
Nay, hath the loss seem'd His but to those hearts  
Which will not waken to wax onward still,  
Which yearn at some stability untoward  
Of creed and custom in our fluxioning :  
Missing the self-stability of Him ?

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XI

FOR the world wakens in these latter days  
As it hath waken'd alway ; and it seems  
As though the wonder-workings of the age  
Were incompatible with what hath been :  
And Christ were grown archaic. And there bide  
Reactionaries who with coward cant  
Apologize for heaven and doubt the fact  
Of earth ; contending 'gainst the crude half-cult  
Of earth-for-earth-alone. But there are ways  
Beyond the ken of either disputant  
To reconcile antinomies : denying  
Nought save their need that truth be dual-whole.

## LOVE POEMS

### XII

AY, we have fought, we even Christ's followers,  
Through darken'd ages of a dual truth :  
One law for earth that leaveth Christ behind  
And one for Christ His kingdom altering not  
Nor suffering adaptation. But we miss  
Still the true view by few if fit attain'd :  
How, by the absolute relinquishment  
Of every creed and tenet to receive  
Each fragment of the new-won basketful,  
Thereby and thus alone the scrap becomes  
Full feast and faith is science-justified.  
Here, love, if love be, shall the faith be won.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XIII

WHAT merit in denying that we know  
For sake of somewhat which, as truths now prove,  
We know in error ? Why pretend our place  
Of Palestine were earthly Paradise,  
And Christ the God-on-earth seen yesterday ?  
Why pretend that my faith in thee now past  
Endureth ? — Yet there 's somewhat in the passing  
Of faith, of Christhood, of an holy place  
Which waxeth aye ! How were a present age  
Itself and present ; how were any truth  
Self-comparable with error : could the world  
“ Be as though yesterday had never been ” ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XIV

THEREFORE assume through every change of truth  
The viewpoint, not of him that must deny,  
But of the faith for which denial stands.

Therefore abjure not of a God-on-earth  
Nor holiness in mere geodesy,  
Till that for once we have assumed the place  
Of Christhood in ourselves ; and, being assured,  
Ay, of the fact that faith in Self hath been,  
Discern what 's presupposed unto all time —  
Now, as to past — by virtue of that Now  
Which is of all-time ; what 's supposed of truth  
Even by denial, yea, by “ love pass'd-by ”.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XV

FOR we may err by too close subtlety  
Of literal analysis, may find  
I never loved : because the love I now  
Conceive, interpret and would seek expound  
Shows loftier with a novel synthesis.  
Yet were the virtue of the new conceit  
Mere affectation were it not attain'd  
Through "writhings of the spirit implacable".  
Our science-world were wanton as the Greek  
Had we not come through ages iron-bound  
Of Schoolmen torturing to the last resort  
The logic antedating their own Christ.

## LOVE POEMS

### XVI

THE logic therefore failing before Him.  
If by too wide reaction men have swerved  
On one hand to denying any rule  
Of reasoning and maintain in face of facts  
Empirical continuance of His word ;  
Or counterfalsely deem the lore of facts  
Sufficient to intelligence nor heed  
Warning of what a will accomplishes :  
Error and counter-error were not His.  
His was a feeling for the faith in facts,  
The fact of faith. — Shall a new logic-law  
Interpret what love spake in parable ?

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XVII

BUT someway we imagine still, with lore  
Of ancient Aristotle platonizing,  
How either were each item isolate  
And self atomic, else the actual flux  
From item unto item finds its stand  
In superimposed conservatism of type ;  
Self still atomic save as generalized  
And merged. We deem our Christ, our love, our faith  
Rather a passing point illuminate  
Somewise by some unaltering source of sight  
Nowise within us save as each were all :  
I, thou but by commingling in desire.

## LOVE POEMS

### XVIII

NOW that communion is an unreal aim,  
Even as Christ a man who truly died ;  
And that there is no fact throughout all earth  
Indifferently another nor facts all  
By any subterfuge : hath love an end ?  
Hath Christ as Christ ceased to have been Himself ?—  
Lurks there one truth in all our waste of facts  
Half-realized, it were : that the fact not-now,  
If utterly distinctively at end  
And nevermore to be confused with fact  
Of any present, thus imperishably  
Lives in the life its death serves to define.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XIX

THE world 's alive but with the paradox  
Of multiple identity conserved  
Even by the passing and the change from it.  
Self were not one ; nor any truth of fact  
Were estimable : save the world beyond  
By no confusion nor no merging with it,  
But by inexorable otherness  
Through every alteration, still defined  
The alterative entity as whole.  
Such for our insight of these latter days  
Half-utter'd, half-foreshadow'd. — Not some Love,  
But my lost love lives in denying it.

## LOVE POEMS

### XX

LOVE, mark the revolution. Science sneers :  
“The isolation is a given surd.  
“How, what the resolution, save by type,  
“We care not.” And the churches stupidly  
Retort: “Eternal verity is one.  
“We see not any seeming paradox  
“To solve.” So each in some agnosticism  
Evades the opportunity. Christ said :  
“I, who am I and thus no other man,  
“Imply men all ; that they are whole by me.”  
But neither of our wisdoms speaks as His ;  
For both are scribes without authority.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XXI

RECORDERS both : that from fresh tablets-trove ;  
This, of old oracle ! — yea, neither clark  
Self-utterance attaining. And the screed,  
Their record of earth-nature as of God,  
Hath need of author. But one scribe hath fail'd  
To foist upon the earth an arbiter ;  
And one discredits thought's necessity :  
Mis-reasoning of a world which point by point  
Conceiveth of itself in every point  
Self-revelation. — Shall we but record,  
Copyists merely ; or, by utterance  
Original, reconcile self and world ?

## LOVE POEMS

### XXII

AND note the blindness. As I pray'd and yearn'd :  
“ Thou shall I be : and thou shalt be my peace ! ” —  
So scoff they both ; the church, the science each  
Predicting absolution : that, “ In God ” ;  
This, “ In the void of cosmic negligence ”.  
It matters little ; for the goal were nought,  
The satisfaction of amalgamance  
A self-destruction. He had better sight :  
“ Because of this my separateness unique,  
“ Define I all ; am therefore whole by them.” —  
How have men shrunk from self-interpreting  
The utterance ! How, wanted to be One !

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XXIII

THIS then is love : to stand beside the world  
A selfhood segregate ; and, thus because  
A thing unique, not substituting for  
Some joy or pain of any, therefore whole —  
Not part of any though defining each —  
A joy, a pain conclusive of theirs all ;  
A sacrifice beyond vicarious  
Atonement, self-creating a world lost  
To learn and thus to save it : in oneself  
To prove divinity to every time.  
And therefore were the cosmos or the God  
Vacant alike in their fatuity.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXIV

SUCH the first step, love, in reconstituting  
The vividness of Christ as of my love.  
To take upon me, as the sins of the world  
Even for redemption by acknowledgment,  
The virtue of the loss, the passing-by  
Of Christ's own story, of thy woman's faith  
(If faith) ; denying nowise of the world  
The absoluteness of the death of it,  
Nor value of death's subject. So I turn  
My soul to feel the vividness of His  
Long-past atonement ; fill my heart with it  
As not-mine : and redeem thereby my world.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XXV

BUT no solipsism, no declaring self  
Alive with love that hath no other-self ;  
No personal divinity without  
The worth of a world created and maintain'd  
In work ! And therefore with the hope to prove  
Thee vivid and the speech made half-divine  
As not since Egypt and a faith disrupt,  
I hitherward have turn'd ; avowing all  
The passing desolation ; yet in change,  
The desertness and insignificance  
Of this waste country, claiming for the Christ  
Fulfilment of a world-divinity.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXVI

As Christ conceived it, palpably the faith  
Was parable, no clear-cut logic-term  
Defining beyond cavil ? Yet I think  
The phrase was for the world, as this for thee ;  
And fitted not too closely to a truth  
Of individual divinity  
The world had misinterpreted straightway !  
Howbeit, such the truth I take of Him,  
And such the resolution : to obtain  
Ability to work in and for thee  
By virtue of the passing of my faith  
And passing of faith's longing to endure.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XXVII

NO mergence, no community ; save as  
The love-totality of faith in self  
To reinterpret and to save a world  
Touches thee and is touchstone of thine own.  
No isolation as in latter days,  
More than the mergence of that past desire ;  
But definition of thy vivid soul  
Not dead, by reference through every act  
To thine activity. That so thy West  
Of onward-working proves compatible  
With life in the spirit : and the world is well.  
No Palestinian wanness : save renew'd.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXVIII

THE world works on. We are not left behind  
Like Egypt, like the love of yesterday  
Nor that false phantom of the shallow creeds  
Who died “but to endure”. For we endure  
Even by entering in and working through  
New tragedies, new desperateness day  
By day, with fresh assurance of a will  
To feel an universe and, feeling earth,  
Earn wholeness in the unique estimate  
Soul puts upon it as soul’s act of faith.  
This be the meaning of mine estimate  
Created in me of an East now dead.

## PALESTINE UNVISITED

### XXIX

DID not I write, then when our faith was new  
And love was victory, and Christ did live,  
And life was as religion ; sang I not  
“ Belovèd, and Mary meets thee on the hills ” ?  
How otherwise the world ! And through what toils  
Of counter-dispensation are we come :  
In image of this tale and tragedy  
Of Christendom ! But now the phrase anew  
Hath meaning. Mary greets thee as her Son  
Not living, nay, nor dead ; but risen from  
The sepulchre of ages when the world  
Look'd to His second coming : unaware.



A MOURNING FOR DEATH



## A MOURNING FOR DEATH

### I

I SANG ; when last the chill frost overlaid  
All passionate earth, and forest fastnesses  
Were steel-stiff, and the world's rigidity  
Wrought in me ; then I sang, as one o'erlaid  
With sepulchring white snow and stiffen'd as  
The forest-iron beyond sufferance :  
Awaiting then a springtime and a sun  
Which, surging, show'd my seeds a barrenness ;  
Proved death — the death of him adored as thou —  
For truth of earth's return to quickening.  
And thou wast so estranged I deem'd thee dead  
Though near me. — Now these songs I send afar. —

## LOVE POEMS

### II

BELOVÈD, I could not latterly abide  
Earth's two-fold tragedy. Bereavement seem'd  
Too utterly, intolerably the truth  
Of every feature of my soul and world !  
Wherfore, since he was not attainable  
Who in default of any fathering God  
Had been eternal Father unto me,  
To thee I turn'd — pardon the hope forlorn ! —  
Who wert attainable : and found my dead  
In so far forth as thou wast of the dead  
Alive as formerly. And now I bear  
Only the death and suffering of him.

## A MOURNING FOR DEATH

### III

'T WERE still a grief sufficient to a soul,  
Amply intolerable : as my breath  
Bore witness when it fail'd then at the first ;  
But now relieved, enlighten'd by the life  
Thy soul's resuscitation sheweth me.—  
I cannot pander to the creeds profess'd  
Of faith in future resurrection known  
For fact impossible. I cannot lie  
In face of truth and try pretend belief  
In any mere continuance of his spirit  
Now nor at any moment after death  
Hath been. But I may learn of life through thee.

## LOVE POEMS

### IV

FOR first let me accept the fact of death  
Such as it still most surely seems to be :  
That now he is not anywhere about,  
Dwelling nor being with me ; but that somewhat  
Which once was he though now is nowise of him  
Lies somewhere placed apart, haply lest we  
Might ever know and craze our hearts with it.  
'T were sweeter to consign unto the fire  
Of purification such sad carrion.  
But, as the fact is, this I know of death  
In plain recital. — I had thought of thee  
Not as the same : though parted as by death.

## A MOURNING FOR DEATH

### V

AND therein, by the seeming severance  
Unalterable and intolerable,  
Had lain the application unto thee  
Of death's, which buried as the dead thy name.  
And now I learn the seeming severance  
Yet revocable ; and the parallel  
A falsifying of the fact of thee.  
And thou wilt be about, and share my store  
Of casual converse ; that we meet and part  
To meet again : so wholly unlike death.  
And only somewhat not felt of the dead  
Debars from fullest life, suggests death still.

## LOVE POEMS

### VI

THAT somewhat wanting to our fullest life  
I need not tell thee now nor make my prayer.  
I wait thee : as I could not wait the dead  
Who change not, wax not as thy soul shall grow.  
I pass the poor complaint and take of thee  
With infinite exaltation that thou givest —  
The opportunity to do thee praise  
In speech and upright living by thy grace  
Unto the end (may I not fall from thee !).  
The possibility to purge my soul  
Of its untoward rebellion, facing death  
And finding in it this, yet lack'd of thee.

## A MOURNING FOR DEATH

### VII

AND finding, in bereavement which abides,  
Life's very fulness which thy life suggests  
As formerly, though even as latterly  
Denies as from some sepulchre. For, whilst  
By lovelessness in thee I held thee dead,  
How might my spirit in the fact of death  
Detect establishment of deathless love ?  
But, now thou art alive as formerly  
(No dream of death), thus even thy lovelessness  
Relieves death of the burthen ; leaveth love  
Rejoicing in its dead as not in life :  
Raiseth the dead to life unendingly.

## LOVE POEMS

### VIII

FOR now I mind me of the facts of death  
With new interpretation : how these years  
Of dispossession and of desolateness  
Are not the years of him who lieth dead.  
Are not the hours of him ; who last did live  
With very love of me upon his lips ;  
For whom no æons of a loneliness  
Weaken one worth of that companionship  
Which fill'd and held — not (as I feel) his last,  
But — his eternally fulfilling days  
Of soulship and of worldhood. For the Now  
Of Self may cease not : though it be not now.

## A MOURNING FOR DEATH

### IX

THUS by the grace of thy resuscitance  
And by the gratitude I owe to thee  
Abides the presence and the life of him  
Even in the wisdom now at length vouchsafed.  
Him have I with me as I held him then  
Beyond the power of any death to take,  
His love and his death equally alive :  
A source of strength and insight as of joy  
Through all-time, solace of the lonely years.  
And when at last thy love affordeth me  
Fulness of life, shall any love be lost  
Because death also hath its victories ?

## LOVE POEMS

### X

BELOVÈD, for the lovelessness of thee,  
Though teaching love's affinity to death,  
Involves no implication that our life  
Is life the more by seeming lack of love.  
Nay, rather, if thy least resuscitance  
Hath power to prove love deepest for the truth  
Of that which otherwise were emptiness  
(Turning the void to some fulfilment still)  
How mightily by this am I confirm'd  
In primal faith : how, bringing to thee all  
That life or death alike in me provide,  
I meet in thee the world that was my soul !

## A MOURNING FOR DEATH

### XI

WHEREFORE is no bereavement recently.  
Wherefore is every blustering of this bleak  
And savage season an assurance (through  
The opportunity to combat strength  
With strength, to enter in and be as one  
With these wild boreal tempests) an assurance  
Of reciprocity in strength with thee,  
Prophecy of thy soul's upsurging spring  
To reconcile and quicken when thou comest.  
Therefore I send unto thy living heart  
These seeds from out my love-fill'd sepulchre  
Not barren, nay, nor sleeping: only, dead.



A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN



# A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

## I

BENEATH these swales of white forgetfulness  
In blank monotony yet beautiful  
(Wherethrough my spirit passes that it sing)  
Lieth another beauty not of them  
Save in its breadth monotonous of harsh  
Insistent savagery. These wastes of schist  
Half-cover'd crystal clean must here and yon  
Still thrust to outcrop where the storm was wild  
That overlaid them, and the grief severe  
That tortured them to their rough imagery  
Of tragic waters in unceasing pain.  
These stones oppress me still for all their snow.

The Lofty  
Bad-Lands

## LOVE POEMS

The East in  
Retrospect

### II

FOR I have been a dweller by that sea  
Whose wintry breath is as a flail of frost  
To beat upon the body and the soul  
Of him who breatheth it. And all its strength  
Is leaden, burdening the heart of him  
To desperation who doth strive thereby  
And take unto himself the shock and roar  
Which poureth from it. Such the Atlantic is  
And such am I, even as the spume-scour'd rock  
That shuddering seethes to sanded nothingness.—  
Thou being as ocean, I must put between  
A continent to dare behold the sea.

# A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

## III

IT were not I would wilfully neglect  
Thee and thy truth's inexorability ;  
Nor wholly that thy truth imposed through mine  
Is tyranny beyond my power to bear.  
But empty art thou of the life my soul  
Must live if anywise be life to me :  
That with some pitiful pretence of life  
(Love's multitudinous delight in earth)  
Forbidden to my spirit must I my sight  
Delude and cheat with shows of passing things.  
The panorama of thine ocean spread  
Did lead me desertward but yesteryear.

The Journey's  
Warrant

## LOVE POEMS

### IV

**The Undertaking**

AND desertward maybe lead me once more  
These oceanic billowings of scene  
Even as formerly. And I yet sick  
Return to take my mockery of life  
Once again unto me : and be as now.  
But, though the worst be, no oblivion  
Can cure the sickness that the spirit knows.  
Therefore be unforgot beneath this shroud  
The desolation and the fruitlessness  
Which soul can garner but by soul alone  
In intimate possession : yea, the death  
Forever in me though I live — as thou !

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### V

AY, between thee and that far shore of strength  
Whereto my journey beareth stretch wide sands  
Unshrouded, naked of a covering scar  
Where loss and isolation alone bide  
Sublime by self-acknowledgment. And there  
Shall snow be seen a source of cosmic fact,  
An implication of the grief below ;  
No lethe, but sealing at worst earth's cirque,  
Rendering self-sufficient unto earth  
Each place of earth's purgation. In such art  
As nature makes of aimlessness beyond  
Self-imposed process shall the sight take truth.

The Desert in  
Expectation

## LOVE POEMS

The Continen-  
tal Parting of  
the Ways

### VI

AND by that truth sense soul's new wakening.  
For even now the rivers of the east  
No longer turn their slow streams unto thee.  
But here be torrents which in some serene  
Southwestward ocean after tortuous course  
Shall find completion and a quick rebirth.  
Though fires had barr'd them yet a mightiest gorge  
Is of their rupturing and their route their own.  
Like to those waters now released from thee,  
Descending from the hills I find outspread  
Still but an image of my nakedness.  
And lesser waters all are lost in it.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### VII

HERE is that vast plain wherearound my soul  
Rears passionately towering, shuddering from  
Its acrid desolation. Cities stand  
About the outskirts of its desertness  
Fair at my feet ; but all its pasturage  
Is penance and the heart of it is full  
Of sourest brine causing, not quenching, thirst.  
From every altitude that is my soul  
Ice as the sweat of my stark agony  
Sweeps down to mingle with that bitterness.  
That wide wan mockery my soul surrounds  
Wholly : no drop shall ever reach a sea.

The Great Salt  
Basin

## LOVE POEMS

### VIII

Its Geodetic  
Destiny

YET but that very bitterness of death,  
This dreg-remains of my dread sacrament,  
Is proof of intimate process where my soul  
Hath purge if drop by drop and sweat by sweat  
Of somewhat which must yet be purged of me.  
Haply in course of ages even my snow,  
My crown of still attempting the great truth,  
Shall melt from my diminishment and then  
Only deintegration tell that once  
Was something that aspired : and I attain  
By surcease of the struggle ; yea, liberate  
These waters as I wholly die with them.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### IX

THOUGH there be some who with a patient thrift  
(Those citizens whose labor looks so fair)  
Are husbandmen of these my frost-fed streams  
To turn into a garden each his place  
With daily watering : and thus my tears  
Are taught some present purpose. But at last  
Must the flow foul and dwindle and those few  
Who trust the hills about them be betray'd.—  
Still is there one who as mine head sinks low  
And lower saith : “ What fume the sun sucks up  
Collected of thy chrism shall more and more  
Pass o'er thee and its longing be appeased.”

And also its  
Mystery

## LOVE POEMS

### X

And Desire

I DOUBT me not that when these hills were new  
They were as I, creatures who took their care  
Of this life-chance within them for some space  
To further, by experience of light  
And air, the natural increase of faith  
Under the sun. And as the heart within  
Their early-aging circumspect grew stale  
No adventitious outlet to their orb  
Relieved the self-suffusion. As my soul  
Became they this intensive tragedy  
Indifferent to earth's life beyond their death.  
But in this hope of death become they whole.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### XI

AN hope of death here seemingly achieved  
By every sign of charnel-bleaching earth.  
A corpse below and in the sky above  
The piercing poison that put out its life  
By too much passion, not enough of peace.  
This then is peace, the hope and help held out  
Of modern insight, of all earth to-day  
As man would make it. — Is no earth of God  
Discoverable, shall no ocean be  
Salvation whence we come and whither go ?  
Behold a beauty to itself alone :  
'T were somewhat. Is there anything beyond?

The American  
Desert

## LOVE POEMS

### XII

Its Fact of  
Failure

PERCHANCE where southward far that stream pursues  
Its wonderwork amid the insensate stones  
(That stream whereof the power is all its own  
And springeth from the source and is not fed  
By any other streams save streams as strong  
To sculpture out a world as is itself :  
Not by the world about it !), there perchance  
Were somewhat nobler, richer than the dream  
Of oceanic mingled mystery.—  
I wot not yet. The desert here doth cry  
For ocean and shall not be satisfied.  
Desiring bread hath earth brought forth a stone.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### XIII

ASSUREDLY not in a desert death  
Is read the lesson of the life of things.  
If seemingly a circuit closed and done,  
Without resumption, yet suggestive still  
Of yearning toward an ocean but beyond.  
And if the destitution be aware  
By self-acknowledgment (as, save self-shamed,  
Were desertness a fair fertility)  
Must ocean be concluded of these stones  
In sensible presence ; and yon barriers  
That westward rear nigh insurmountable  
Inspire but soul's best effort to surpass.

And Mystical  
Redemption

## LOVE POEMS

### XIV

The Snowy  
Range

LO ! for the conquest shall exhibit fields  
Of full fertility for patent fact ;  
The weathering of the cycle of the streams  
For absolution : if mysterious still  
By abnegation, yet by rich access  
Of multitudinous fecundity  
Thereby proved universal every stone ;  
And desertness no limitation but  
Some end and aim in virtue of itself. —  
Thus in the paths of earlier conquerors  
To force the achievement and be free at last  
Of the immediate system of the sea !

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### XV

ALL earth would sing. — But there is much of blame  
To pardon in those earlier conquerors  
Ere paradise be wholly here approved.  
Blood-stains of conquest, rage to rifle earth  
Of earth's worst bane or bounty, scoring all  
With plague-pits of past desertness anew.  
Nor hath men's exploitation of the fields  
Been pure of tyranny and toils of shame.  
The grief is here which ever bides with men  
Of concupiscence. May the unlusting hills  
Which hymn the high Pacific yet teach men's hearts  
The harvesting and garnering of soul.

The Central  
Californian  
Valleys

## LOVE POEMS

### XVI

The Country  
of the Spanish  
Fathers

BEHOLD, for there hath been a chronicle  
Of loftiest effort after singleness  
Of spirit to the benefit of men  
By stern self-abnegation. And the tale  
Soothes the vex'd soul in its contemplating.  
In that old history the earth and air,  
The hills and the quick streams do all conspire  
With ocean to the consecrating of  
The human purpose and are proof of it.  
The sense of desolation as of thee  
Is lifted from my spirit ; as thus I take  
Religion of the loss, learn'd of these hills.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### XVII

HERE was the spirit of the conquerors  
Not too much stain'd with conquest. Here that rage  
To ransack earth seized not upon men's souls.  
Nor modernly hath stark oppression mark'd  
The working of new highways to the world :  
As where with wheat are flesh and blood thresh'd out  
To glut the seven-fold monster. But these vales  
Harbor their people ; with the sea before,  
The serious hills behind to be their hearth  
And heaven to roof them. While above their fields  
Stand towers, not towers of conquest, but the home  
Of harvesters and vineyarders of men.

Their Fair  
South Coast

## LOVE POEMS

### XVIII

Its Missions

FOR pious priests have toil'd along this land  
With book and bell, with solemn forest-cross  
To yield salvation ; and have suffer'd some  
Their crowning martyrdom ; and some have pass'd  
Full of the ripe years laden low with souls.  
And there be those who still at cheerful tilth  
Bear the brown robe and greet their ground with  
prayer.  
A creed is in these mountains ; and along  
This shore lies wondering many a mystic isle  
Where fragments of the hills, having stepp'd down,  
Receive a baptism each of its own cloud  
Upgather'd and descending as a dove.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### XIX

DAY by day, yea, along this sun-steep'd coast  
As over every isle of omen'd blue  
Riseth the sea-wind softly and upon  
The flanks and features of these hills uncouth  
Maketh a cloud to crown and cover them.  
The brute-like breast, the gaunt, bough-bearing brow  
That unregenerate rear unashamed  
At heaven, lie hooded and their ridge engown'd.  
And o'er their limbs these peaks initiate  
Receive the oil and ichor coursing down  
In sacramental secrecy to brim  
The one wide holy basin bathing all.

And its  
Mountains

## LOVE POEMS

### XX

The Mountains'  
Metaphor

I HAVE ascended as these rains descend  
To feel the absolution : and have seen.—  
The flood beneath that by infiniteness . . .  
Symbols the wholeness of the acknowledged soul ;  
Ocean beneath in far tranquillity.  
And neighboring the strand those emerald swales  
Which are the first and best of human works,  
Fieid-gardens in their young fecundity.  
And, round about me, strugglings as of some  
Effort to lift as earth shall lift no more.  
But over all, brooding and crowning near,  
That consolation cloud-born of the sea.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

### XXI

THUS, thus shall all earth's struggling then attain,  
By consecration to the accepted cup.

Thus soul's deintegration (felt and fear'd  
In former song and by that earlier song  
As death accepted) were shown sacred yet.—  
The rains descend. I as those barren buttes  
Of yesterday am wash'd into the sand  
A desertness ; but as these hills to-day  
Should take some splendor by the tragic truth,  
Some sense of self-repletion. "From the sea,  
"So back unto the sea": were void ; save for  
Such storm-hewn steeps to shrink and suffer still.

And its Interpretation

## LOVE POEMS

### XXII

Their Time of  
Emptiness

A SEASON cometh in each rounded year  
When clouds are wanting and the relentless sky  
Sucks up no moisture save from earth alone.  
The vineyards wither and the fields of tilth  
Are shrivell'd every one unto a scar  
To tell of passions, burnings that have been  
But are not in those days of afterdeath.  
Myself was but some scar of afterdeath,  
Some cicatrice where passion onetime was ;  
But as the reawakening of these hills  
To cloud-crown'd tragedy I too shall grow  
Couraged to suffer comprehendingly.

## A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

XXIII

THE barren spirit of the conquerors  
Perchance was in me — them whose only aim  
Was fierce possession. Surely was I one  
Who fain had ransack'd earth and heaven to know  
The treasure of thine heart nor leave it whole.  
Oppression was there, mine own bone and blood  
Forced to the wine-press to be worthier thee  
By unremitting labor. Even have I  
Fled from an ocean, from thine absoluteness  
To save a self. — But now these wrongs are past.  
I pray by the Pacific and serve his flood  
With offering of my song drawn of his streams.

## LOVE POEMS

### XXIV

The Same

YEARS may return when yet myself a flood,  
Fill'd with the strange swift strength of serving thee  
(Though nowise merged sea-wasted in thy soul),  
Shall hew awide, as almost erst, a course  
Through desertness indifferent : we being thus  
Creative-sculpturing as that rich stream  
Southwestwardly wreaking on self surprised  
Its powerful purpose to be perfect god.  
Time was when prospect of such power of heart  
Had seem'd a peace passing this present peace  
Less nobly vouchsafed. But herein I hymn  
Content this dream that passeth only death.

# A JOURNEY FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN

## XXV

NEVER anew the fear, the dread fatigue  
Of meeting thee upon that marge of self  
Where land and life with agony have end.  
Never anew absorption 'neath thy deeps.  
But acclamation of the private loss  
(Thus absolute, conclusive of thy truth !)  
Unending in this difference of heart  
'Twixt earth and flood, my sufferance and thee.  
Thy surge descends, thy strong denial thrills  
The storm-wrought stone, the strain'd experience  
That rears at outlook o'er thine infinite.  
I rise new-bathed, a continent, from thee.

And Again  
The Same

THE END

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